

The Dreamer

Exclusive news for the St. Joseph's Indian School DreamMakers



March 2024

St. Joseph's Student Selected as Participant for Prestigious Medical Forum

St. Joseph's students are on their way to changing the world for the better!

Mersayis took a few deep breaths before boarding a plane headed to California. At 17 years old, this flight would be the St. Joseph's Indian School student's first flight ever!

Although the idea of traveling alone to an unknown place may seem like a daunting experience for some, Mersayis harnessed her bravery and took her seat. Before she knew it, she'd be at the University of California Berkeley for a week-long experience as a participant of the National Youth Leadership Forum (NYLF) Medicine & Health Care.

Being selected for NYLF is no easy feat, as many students apply each year. Mersayis, an aspiring nurse, was the only student from South Dakota selected for the opportunity after her high school's Health Occupations Students of America club advisor nominated her. Krista, St. Joseph's Alumni Relations Coordinator, helped with her application and travel plans.

"I was very nervous to be there alone and not know anyone, but I feel like it showed me how it would potentially be in the real world when I do travel alone," said Mersayis.

Once her feet arrived at Berkeley, it was time



for Mersayis to see if her dream of being a nurse could match what she'd envisioned. She was there to experience the collegiate lifestyle firsthand, learn from doctors, participate in an interactive curriculum, visit an accredited medical school, test her medical knowledge during clinical skills rotations and explore professional opportunities among fellow high school students.

A typical day began in classrooms from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. learning new things about various medical professions and topics. After a break for lunch, Mersayis and the other participants from across the United States were given some free time before returning to classrooms at 1:30 p.m. for more medical lessons. Supper followed from 5-6 p.m., with a medical speaker rounding out the day from 7-8 p.m.

"The parts of the program that made the biggest impression for me were when they

(over, please)



took us to medical places,” said Mersayis. “For example, they took us to the simulation center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. They also took us to a couple universities. At one university we saw a real human heart!”

“Something I took away from this experience is how nurses and doctors, or any person in the medical field, truly take their jobs seriously — how much they want to help people,” said Mersayis. “When I decided I wanted to be in the medical field, the main reason was because I love helping people. The doctors and nurses showed me that their number one priority is to help the patient and work in the safest way possible.”

It was an experience Mersayis says she won’t soon forget.

“I would rate my experience a 10,000 out of 10! I loved it! Although I was very, very nervous I feel like this was a great learning experience in many different ways!” said Mersayis.

Invigorated by her experience, Mersayis didn’t need to harness so much bravery or take as many deep breaths on the flight home to South Dakota. She’d accomplished what she had set out to achieve and had learned so much about the medical field. Not only that, but Mersayis also got a taste of what she’s capable of being — someone who was able to step out of her comfort zone and go for something big.

“I just want to say thank you to everyone who helped me experience this opportunity, it was amazing in every single way possible,” said Mersayis. “St. Joe’s helped me with the fundraising and plane tickets. Being away from home and traveling by myself was very scary, but I had multiple staff who checked in on me, which meant a lot.”

Philámayaye — *thank you* — to you, our DreamMaker, who supports educational experiences and opportunities for our Native American students, like Mersayis. Because of you, students are reaching and working toward their dreams of a brighter future!



DID YOU KNOW?

There are some everyday words in Lakota to describe the items and experiences Mersayis had!

Kiŋyékhiyapi — *Airplane*

WaákisniyA — *Doctor*

Wayázaŋ awáŋyaŋka — *Nurse*

Owáyawa — *School*

Learn more Lakota words and phrases with us each Wednesday on Facebook! Visit stjo.org/LWW today.

Tanyán yahípi! — Welcome everyone!

Lakota

WORD WEDNESDAY



St. Joseph's Indian School
We serve and teach, we receive and learn.

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Dear Donor;
My name is Caleb and
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I thank you for
helping my school.
I love that I learn new
things at St Joe's.
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Amirya

